



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services
Council on Developmental Services



Dannel P. Malloy
Governor

TESTIMONY TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
FROM THE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES
ON HB 5534 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROVISION OF SERVICES TO
INDIVIDUALS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES.

March 19, 2014

Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson and Members of the Public Health Committee,

My name is Patti Silva and I serve as Chair of the Council on Developmental Services. The Council, under the General Statutes of Connecticut, is charged to *"recommend to the Governor and to the General Assembly such legislation as will in its judgment improve the care and training of persons with intellectual disability. C.G.S. Section 17a-270 as amended by PA 11-16."* I am writing today to offer the Council's thoughts on Raised Bill 5534 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROVISION OF SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES. While well-intentioned, this bill as currently drafted may not be the best particular vehicle to meet the needs of consumers and families on the waiting list whom we represent.

What our families and citizens with intellectual disabilities need and deserve, however, is a significant increase to the DDS budget to address the families in desperate need who are Emergency and Priority 1 persons on the Waiting List. As I will share below, those needs and the cost to address them have been specifically quantified by DDS.

It is crucial to note that there has been no funding for the Waiting List since 2009, and those on the Waiting List have rapidly deteriorating living situations. There are no resources available for those in stable situations with elderly caregivers to allow for proactive planning and life changes. People with intellectual disabilities are living longer, healthier lives and their support needs are life-long. Supports are also necessary for families not currently on the Waiting List so that they will not be driven towards requesting more extensive services due to lack of respite and other supports.

Under Commissioner Macy's leadership, DDS is moving to a more flexible person-tailored service delivery system, which is necessary to develop more innovative and less costly

services where ever possible. To do this, DDS must have an infusion of new money now to establish and transition toward a better and more efficient system. If the Waiting List is funded, the impact on Connecticut will be significantly reduced through Federal funding.

The Council would also like to help clarify any confusion as to the extent of the DDS Waiting List. Attached is a [memo](#) dated March 6 drafted by Joseph Drexler, Deputy Commissioner of DDS. The memo specifies the exact numbers of the current waiting list and the cost to address the needs of those people. Several very important points from the memo are below:

- 30% of those caring at home for an Emergency or Priority #1 individual are *over age 70*.
- The DDS Emergency Waiting List is comprised of 37 individuals.
- The annual funds needed to serve those Emergencies is \$4,122,636.
- The DDS Priority 1 Waiting List is comprised of 598 individuals (in addition to the Emergency List).
- The annual funds needed to serve those Priority 1 individuals is \$58,987,221.

The Council on Developmental Services is available to discuss this issue further should you wish to do so. Thank you for your time and we appreciate your attention to these issues. We strongly urge you to consider our recommendations, which will directly benefit and address the some of the most vital needs of our families.

Respectfully yours,

Patti Silva, Chair
Wethersfield

[Attachment](#)

cc: Commissioner Terrence W. Macy
Connecticut Council on Developmental Services
John N. Frost, Vice Chair, Essex
Jamie Lazaroff, Secretary, Hampton
Adrienne Benjamin, New Britain
David Hadden, Simsbury
James Heffernan, Wethersfield
Diana Mennone, Woodbury
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